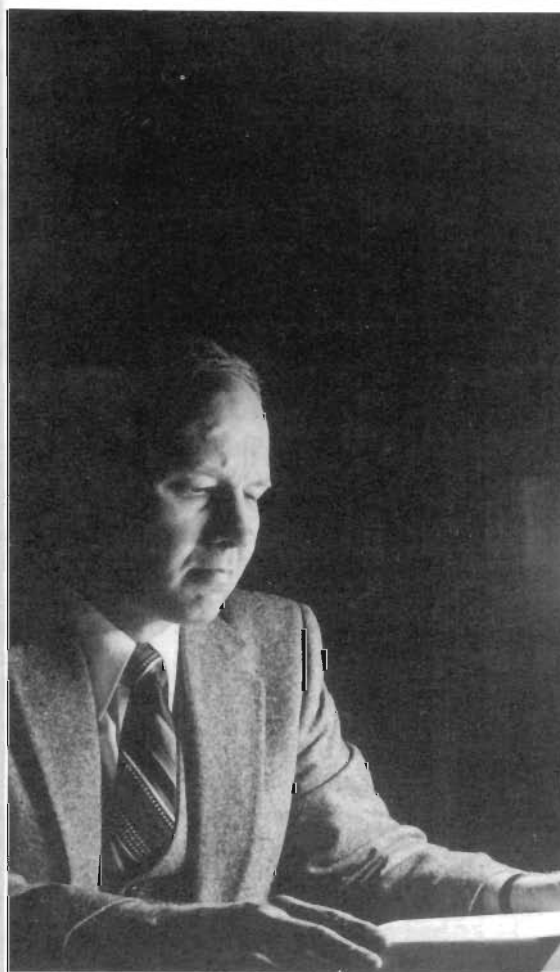




# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

October 4, 1994



*What really is Worship?*

# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

October 4, 1994 • Vol. 32, No. 18

## THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

is published biweekly (except for the first issue of July and the first issue of August) by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441.

### CONTENTS

In spirit and in truth	p. 3
A legacy in worship	p. 5
Let's celebrate	p. 6, 7
Please take out our hymnal	p. 8, 9

Subscriptions: \$15.00 year, U. S.  
\$18.00 year, International

Write to:

*The Lutheran Ambassador*  
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Send all communications concerning this magazine to: Solveig Hjermstad, Assistant to the Editor, Box 423, Faith, South Dakota 57626. Phone (605) 967-2381. Fax (605) 967-2382.

USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413  
Second-class postage paid at Minneapolis, Minnesota, and additional mailing office.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *The Lutheran Ambassador*, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441.

Rev. Craig Johnson, Editor  
Mrs. Wayne Hjermstad, Assistant to the Editor

Editorial Board:

Rev. John Mundfrom  
Dr. Craig Jennings  
Mrs. Oryen Benrud

## Light on the Way

### Worship in the hereafter

*In a loud voice they sang: Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!*  
*Revelation 5:12.*

What can we learn about worship for the here and now from the hereafter scenes of worship as we find them in the last book of the Bible? In Revelation we see the unveiling of Christ in His glory. The worship scenes are awesome and explode in doxologies. The very first chapter begins with a doxology of praise "to Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood" (Revelation 1:5b). Right from the beginning we see John, overcome by the brightness of Jesus' glory, falling at His feet as though dead. The contrast between the description of true worship and false worship are overwhelming. We see Lamb worshippers and beast worshippers!

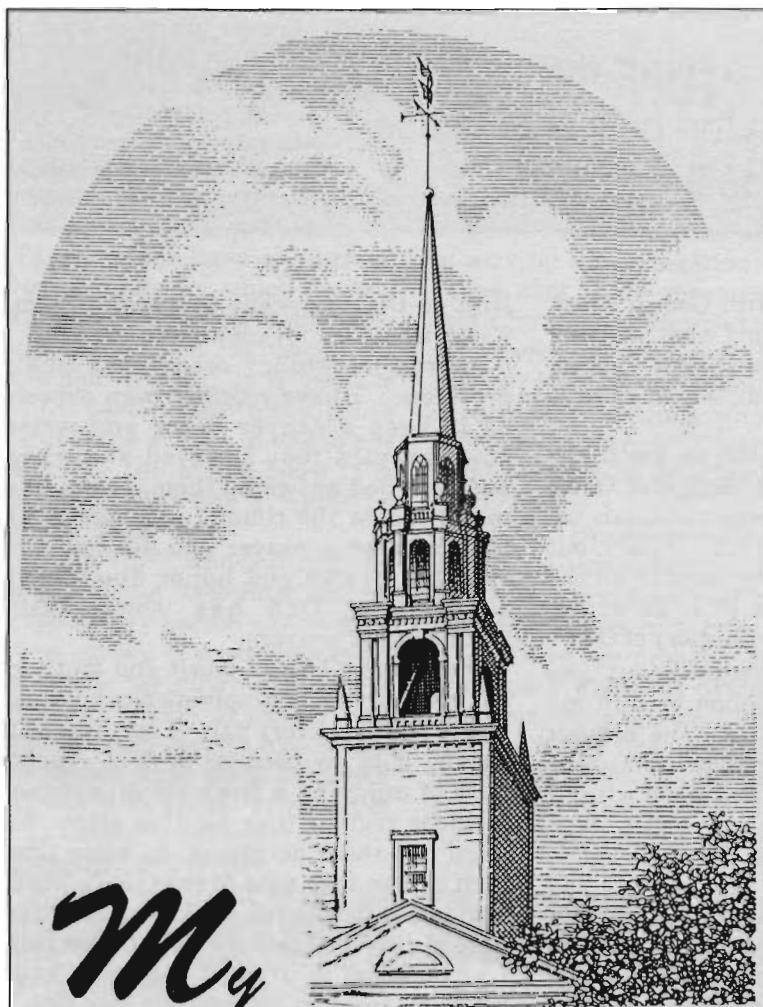
Multitudes have been attracted to the beast as they have seen his great power and authority, his wonders and miraculous signs. They have been wowed and wooed, forced and coerced. Neither the wise nor the ignorant, the high nor the low, the strong nor the weak are free from his deception and power. "The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, 'Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?' ... All the inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast — all whose names

have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world" (Revelation 13:3b, 4, 7, 8).

God's people worship the Lamb: "They follow the Lamb wherever He goes" (14:4b). The Lamb who was slain is the Only One found worthy to take the sealed scroll and to open it since He is the One who purchased full redemption with His blood. The Lamb holds the title to the universe by right of creation and purchase! Because of our sin the devil has held sway too long. John in his first letter writes, "We know that we are children of God, and the whole world is under the control of the evil one" (I John 5:19). But now the time has come; the seals are broken, the Lamb takes possession step by step of His purchased possession! Evil hordes resist and seem to conquer even the saints, but the Lamb finally conquers and judgment and justice follow. No wonder angels and saints will sing and shout "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory!" (Revelation 19:6b, 9a). Can we do less right here and now!?

It seems to me that we had better learn to sing and shout and serve the Lord here if we hope to harmonize with the heavenly choirs.

— by Odell Kittelson



*My  
heart is longing to  
praise my Savior,  
And glorify His name in  
song and pray'r;  
For He has shown me His  
wondrous favor  
And offered me all heav'n with  
Him to share.*

— "My Heart is Longing to Praise My Savior"  
Lars Oftedal  
Ambassador Hymnal No. 198

# In spirit and in truth

## A lifestyle of worship

**H**ow can we live a lifestyle of worship? The Samaritan woman asked this question in John 4:19, 20: "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain; and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus wanted her and He wants us to see beyond the question of methodology. In His reply, He cut to the heart of the matter. "Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, an hour is coming, when neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth'" (John 4:21, 26).

Jesus links worshipping in spirit with the truth that God is spirit. Worship is a recognition of God's true nature. He is the Creator. He is not limited by the physical. He is beyond us. Furthermore, God the Eternal Spirit is Eternal Good. True worship recognizes that.

False worship is often characterized by trying to get on God's (or an idol's) good side by following correct ritual. I recently stepped into a store in San Antonio called "Botanica." Rather than a plant store, I discovered it was filled with candles, oils, soaps and other superstitious merchandise. One candle was to give success in the lottery. A potion would keep a wayward husband at home. The store was filled with evil trash that denied the true nature of God who is not manipulated by mechanical ritual. The image of Jesus appeared on nearly every shelf, yet it was not the true Christ who promised: "Take courage, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

True worshippers bow to God the Eternal Spirit and joyfully accept His truth. The Bible is our source of truth. Jesus said in John 8: 31, 32, 36: "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." To worship in spirit and in truth

◇

The real factor in worship is a heart desire for God;  
the reason it fails to occur in the pew is because  
it fails to occur in the daily routine of living.

— Ronald Allen, Gordon Borrer  
*Worship: Rediscovering the  
Missing Jewel*

requires an encounter with God in which we see who He truly is and what we truly are. Then we are caused to bow to Him, not only to hear the truth, but to know it and to be set free by it!

When we experience this, we are affected in everyday life! We recognize God's presence when the evidence surrounds us. David declared in Psalm 8:1, "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Thy name in all the earth." Later in Psalm 19:1, he wrote, "The heavens are telling the glory of God."

**A consuming selfless desire to give to God is the essence and the heart of worship. It begins with the giving first of ourselves and then of our attitudes, and then of our possessions — until worship is a way of life.**

— John MacArthur  
*The Ultimate Priority*

A friend wrote about the killdeer, a common bird in my native Minnesota. "The bravest mother killdeer that I remember stood her ground even after I stopped the tractor and walked up to her nest. She refused to leave but stood over her eggs and glared at me with fierce red eyes. As I slowly extended my hand to the nest, this little bird, no larger than a robin, pecked my finger. I hardly felt the peck, but I did feel something else. I felt as if I was in the presence of that little bird's Creator. I stood up and worshiped the One who had put such devotion and courage into a little bird" (David Schonberg in *Ecology and Beyond*).

True worship means recognizing God's gifts in the things we have and giving thanks for them. That includes truly enjoying and relishing them (I Timothy 4:3-5). It also includes intently looking to God for all our needs. I love Psalm 37:4: "Delight thyself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart." When God is our delight, He changes us so the things we want and ask Him for are things He wants to give us. A lifestyle of ownership is never a "have to" to please God. His plan is for us to be changed by

Him so that we want to worship Him. That's where the joy comes in!

A true worshiper recognizes God's providence. I have recently been exhorted to keep a prayer diary and write down prayers that I prayed and when and how God answered them. Doing this would lessen the times I did not notice He answered a prayer and did not give Him the praise and honor due. Many times over, God has wonderfully answered my prayers.

Worshiping God in spirit and truth in our everyday lives simply means knowing God is there in every part of our lives and having true joy because of it. A crucial part of enjoying a lifestyle of worship includes regular time for God alone. We often call these devotions. At some time each day we take time to read God's Word. Perhaps a devotional book is used. Take time to pray and talk with Him. One man I know likes to pray at a certain spot where he stops on his morning bike ride. I read the Bible each morning following the schedule found in the new *Ambassador Hymnal*. I love to pray the Lord's Prayer.

Your devotions may take different forms. It is good to have a special time of Bible reading and prayer, but in a lifestyle of worship, you will find yourself in a constant conversation with God which does not end when you say "Amen" at the end of a formal prayer! Worship is not confined within the forms of a worship service or devotions. A Christian's entire life is worship and praise to God!

May each of us be confronted, like the Samaritan woman, by the Lord who knows everything about us and still loves us and can set us free with His truth. I pray that each of us will develop good habits that aid in worship and also that we can see beyond the forms to the heart of the matter — worshiping God in spirit and in truth.

(All Bible references are from the New American Standard Bible.)



— Rev. Michael Peterson  
Good Shepherd Lutheran  
Pleasanton, Texas

People around our world gather on Sunday mornings. Although the meeting times may not be the same, the surroundings may be different, it may be with a few or with hundreds, but it is all for one purpose — to worship.

If you were asked to describe your Sunday morning worship service, what would you say? Perhaps these phrases would come to mind: we praise and thank; confess and confide; honor and adore. Whatever words you use to describe your worship service, the question is worthy of thought.

Each congregation has an impact for the Lord by the manner in which we worship. From the earliest age when our children learn to sing "Jesus Loves Me," through the age of our oldest members, we need to consider how to best provide opportunity to give God full and lasting honor. Should our congregation offer the stability of a more traditional service or should we confront our people with different patterns of worship? The best approach gives the strongest attention on God's Holy Word. In the midst of varied and good opinions, we must consider which approach provides for every age group the best capacity for instant replay.

When children leave their home church, will they have a memory recall of their worship service? We encourage children to memorize Bible verses so they may be equipped servants of the Lord. We should also be concerned about our worship service and offer our children the consistency that triggers instant recall of their worship pattern.

Our older friends at some point, often benefit from a tape ministry. They should have a mental picture of sitting in the sanctuary at their worship service. Without a bulletin or a hymnal in hand, they should enjoy such a familiarity with the service that they feel they are actually participating while listening to the tape.

In every generation, some individuals have a strong compulsion to leave a legacy. Sometimes one will expound on an idea or claim to have solved a problem. Then everyone is encouraged to "make a change." At times we just change and no improvement occurs. We in the church can get caught up in the idea that we need change when we feel our worship service is lacking something.

We ask questions. Does a pattern of change create alertness or confusion? Is



# A legacy in worship

consistency challenging or boring?

We may rationalize that boredom comes from repetition. Order and even repetition in our services may enhance the Word of God. If we must concentrate on searching for responses, we lose focus and continuity which we should have as we approach the time for the preaching of the Word.

A dear, old pastor friend who influenced my personal commitment to the Lord once told me that in his seminary education, emphasis was placed on the inclusion of a clear message of salvation in every sermon. This was done so if a person heard only this one message in his lifetime, his heart would be open to the call of the Holy Spirit. My friend wove the "thread of salvation" into every sermon. The repetition was not boring, but the message was clear. I admit that worship responses rarely change but their significance was made meaningful because of the spoken Word.

A worship service should not confuse and disrupt. It is a time to feel comfortable with familiar responses that become so meaningful as my heart desires to be renewed and nourished with God's Word.

Oh yes, changes occur with the church year, church festivals and on special days commemorating the God-given Means of Grace. I enjoy these changes as they enhance these special times of worship.

Our new *Ambassador Hymnal* offers an order of service with flexibility without confused searching. Perhaps your congregation does not have them, if so I suggest purchasing about six copies. Then your pastor and organists can get acquainted with the orders of worship and as a congregation you might choose to use one of the settings. How nice it is to visit other AFLC congregations and be familiar with the order of service that is used.

Worship is personal. Whatever approach you prefer in your worship service, give all the honor and praise to God!

Having a  
worship service  
that triggers  
instant  
recall.

— by Oryen Benrud  
Our Saviour's  
Lutheran  
Zumbrota, Minnesota




# Let's

**W**orship Service — 9 a.m. The pastor reminds us in his announcements, yet usually it does not evoke a response of enthusiasm. But let some of us hear an announcement about when our favorite team will be on television and we get excited. Why don't we get more excited about going to a worship service? After all, are we not giving honor and praise to the King of kings and Lord of lords? Isn't that exciting? Or is worship supposed to be a solemn, sober experience?


Definitely there is a serious side to worship. The Old Testament describes people consecrating themselves to prepare for worship. This was a ceremonial washing or purifying. In order to worship in a meaningful way, it requires a certain amount of focus and seriousness. But is this the only way to worship God? Is there another side to worship?

In I Chronicles 13, we read about a celebratory worship. David and the Israelites had a great celebration in recognition of the return of the ark of the covenant and the renewal of their religious traditions. They celebrated "with all their might" before God with songs and using a variety of instruments.


Worship in the Old Testament involved both confession and celebration. Celebration was not only allowed, but it seemed to be a very important part. Their calendar included many days set aside for feasts and celebrations. God does not intend for religion to be only meditation and introspection. He also wants us to celebrate. The God of the Bible encourages joy! It is a common misconception that God is against




*Give to our  
God  
immortal praise!*



*Mercy and  
truth are all  
His ways;*



*Wonders of  
grace to  
God belong:*



*Repeat His  
mercies in  
your song.*

— "Give to Our God Immortal Praise"  
Isaac Watts  
*Ambassador Hymnal No. 205*

Worship is about God, not man. The worship of God does do many things for us as individuals and as a community. But true worship should be defined in terms of God first of all. Worship is about God, and worship is what God desires from us.

— Ronald Allen, Gordon Borrer  
*Worship: Rediscovering  
the Missing Jewel*

# celebrate!

celebration, wanting to take all the fun out of life. In reality, God wants to give us abundant life. "I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10b). If we love God, we have much to celebrate!

When we celebrate in worship, we are actually celebrating with God. We need special days set aside to come together for rest, refreshment, and remembering with thanksgiving all God has done for us. As believers, God has given us a special day just for that purpose. We can also plan other special occasions when we can gather together to celebrate. Look at Old Testament examples of generous celebrations: Leviticus 23:44; I Chronicles 12:40; II Kings 23:21-23; and Esther 9:19-22 to list some. I like the attitude reflected in Esther where it says they observed the days of feasting and joy and gave presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

Music seems to have an important role in celebratory worship. We are encouraged many times to sing for joy to the Lord as in Psalm 95. David helped bring music into worship. Music was created by God and can be returned to Him in praise. Psalm 100 reads: "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness, come before Him with joyful song." From the many instruments listed in the Bible, the impression is given that praising God was a lively and energetic experience. Is that enthusiasm missing in our churches today?

There are ways we can create more enthusiasm and an attitude of celebration in our worship.

*What, then, is the essence of worship? It is the celebration of God! When we worship God, we celebrate Him: We extol Him, we sound His praises, we boast in Him.*

— Ronald Allen, Gordon Borror  
*Worship: Rediscovering the Missing Jewel*

1. Use alternative texts and music in our liturgy.
2. Use a variety of musical instruments and musical settings.
3. Have a special worship/praise part of the service — some do this just before the regular worship hour.
4. Have a special worship service Sunday evening or during the week with a special emphasis on praise and worship.
5. Have the youth lead a special Sunday morning worship.
6. Rediscover the meaning and purpose behind your liturgy — spend time going through each part and explain its significance.

Anything that enriches our traditional service can help revitalize our worship. We may have become so comfortable with routine that we neglect to focus on the true meaning and purpose behind it. We may be satisfied with our worship, but is God? May we not be like the Israelites in Isaiah 29:13-14, who honored God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him. Their worship had become a ritual of rules taught by men.

Attitude is vitally important in our worship. Psalm 100:4 says: "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise." Do we have thankful and praise-filled hearts when we enter God's house? At times the excitement of daily activities strangle thoughts of the Lord and His Word. Chances are others can see in us the things which we value the most.

One day there will be a great celebration, unlike anything any of us have seen or heard. There will be sounds of a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder (Revelation 19). Christ's return will be a great day of celebration that will continue throughout all eternity! We can enjoy a small taste of that today in our worship. We can honor and praise this same great King whenever we gather in His house. God invites us to celebrate with Him. Let us carry a positive attitude and hearts that are ready each time we enter God's house. Maybe we will then have an enthusiastic anticipation about our next worship service as we truly celebrate with God.

— by Darrell Haugen  
*New Luther Valley Lutheran  
McVie, North Dakota*

# Please take out your hymnal

Most people I know associate the hymnal with either the sanctuary of their church or a genre of worship embraced by another generation. For me, however, the hymnal is more than a book of congregational song; it is an entire library of personal faith. Indeed, a veritable devotional reservoir. My dog-eared hymnal is as much at home on my night stand as it is in the pew rack.

## A Primer of Praise

My lyrical old friend has taught me how to verbalize my love for God. Ever since becoming a Christian, I have struggled to find words with which to express my worship. Inwardly I felt overwhelmed by the majesty and power of my Creator, but I lacked the ability to communicate that adoration in thoughts or words. My hymnal increased my vocabulary of praise. Reading the lyricist's words was like learning a new language. My feelings found a focus in powerful word pictures. Imagine my joy to find the words of Walter C. Smith's "Immortal, Invisible":

*Immortal, invisible God only wise,  
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,  
Most blessed, most glorious,*

*the Ancient of Days,  
Almighty, victorious,  
Thy great name we praise.*

It was a great relief to realize my feelings of awe and joy need not remain unspoken.

## A Chronicle of Confession

I have found that when I meet the Lord in quiet solitude, I need to face myself before I face Him. Still, my tendency is to rationalize lustful thought or that white lie or that unkind rumor I passed down the grapevine. Who wants to own up to the fact that they're guilty? I know who — those who want to maintain a vital fellowship with the Father. The hymnal is like a mirror. Within the covers of my hymnal I find my own reflection in the inkings of another, in page after page of eloquent imperfection. The lyrics of Robert Robinson's "Come Thou Fount" mirror my life:

*May Thy goodness like a fetter,  
bind my wandering heart to Thee.  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love.  
Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it.  
Seal it for Thy courts above.*

## A new hymnal, a new devotional tool

My parents have three old Norwegian books that were handed down to them from their forefathers. A Bible, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and a hymnal. These three books nourished the faith of a faithful generation. The Bible and good Christian books still build up spiritual life of Christians. The use of the hymnal as a devotional tool has declined.

When we prepared the *Ambassador Hymnal* I had hopes that it could be a devotional resource as well as a hymnal. To do that we included many helps such as a plan for reading the Bible through in a year and the Scripture lessons for each Sunday of the year. You can look ahead and prepare your heart for Sunday worship by reading the lessons your church uses. There is a simple outline of the way of salvation which could even be used to lead people to Christ at evangelistic services. In my personal devotions I am reading through the Scripture readings section

of the hymnal which takes a person through major portions of the whole Bible. *Luther's Small Catechism* and the *Augsburg Confession* are also helpful resources.

A very meaningful devotional practice is to prepare for Bible study by reading through hymns. Sometimes reading hymns allows you to respond to their message in a way that is hard when you are trying to sing them. I am finding that many hymns that I avoid singing because they are too hard or I don't know them still have a deep message that meets the need of my soul when I read them.

I hope that the *Ambassador Hymnal* will be used as a devotional supplement to your Bible reading. Perhaps you will find that the hymnal will nourish your heart even better than many Christian books you have been reading. Give it a try. The hymnal helped sustain the daily spiritual life of our grandparents and I know personally that it has helped me.

— Rev. Tom Olson  
Cumberland,  
Wisconsin



Before I began incorporating the hymnal into my quiet time, I lacked the contentment that comes from concrete confession. It's easier to come clean with God when you have words that put it out there, plain and simple. Admitting failure in sufficient detail invites closure. Abstract guilt, on the other hand, results in a fuzzy sense of forgiveness. Try reading Charlotte Elliott's "Just as I am" as your personal prayer to God.

### **An Encyclopedia of Experience**

As I began to spend more time with my hymnal, I discovered it was also a storybook containing countless autobiographies of grace.

When tempted to doubt the freedom Christ has won for me, I turn to Charles Wesley's "Amazing Love." I hear the prison doors clank open as I read:

*Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night.  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray.  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light,  
My chains fell off. My heart was free.  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.*

When at the close of the day I question God's ability to redeem the chaos of my efforts, I am warmed by another's faith in God's fatherlike love. The 200-year-old words of John Newton's "Amazing Grace" remind me just how everlasting that grace continues to be.

*Through many dangers, toils and snare,  
I have already come.  
'Tis grace that's brought me safe thus far  
And grace will lead me home.*

### **A Doctrinal Diary**

It has been said that Martin Luther's followers sang the Reformation into being perhaps because so many of their hymns preach from the page. My mind is bathed in biblical truth as I begin my day with Luther's "A Mighty Fortress." It reminds me of God's unequalled dominion and His loving disposition toward me as revealed in His Son and Spirit.

*Let goods and kindred go,  
This mortal life also —  
The body they may kill;  
God's truth abideth still;  
His kingdom is forever.*

More winsome than a theology text, more beautiful than a catechism, hymns are a helpful way to celebrate our beliefs as Christians. In singable sentences, one

after another, we learn the redemption story. The end result is an **increasing** appreciation for doctrine that is **anything** but dry.

### **A Lexicon of Love**

Several months ago a choir from Siberia performed in our church. The members of the group were not Christians. They simply wanted a place to perform while visiting America. We couldn't imagine not honoring their request. We wanted to hear their voices enunciate their newfound freedom. As part of their concert of Russian folk songs and classical pieces, they included a few hymns locked in vaults for over 70 years. They were awesome!

Following the program I invited the audience to stand and sing a hymn that had originated in Sweden but passed through Russia before arriving in America. The choir, having never heard "How Great Thou Art," began to weep. Such a simple hymn, replete with a theology of creation, redemption, and Heaven. The third verse of Stuart Hine's classic contains the message of salvation in just 37 words:

*And when I think that God,  
His Son not sparing,  
Sent Him to die,  
I scarce can take it in;  
That on the cross,  
my burden gladly bearing,  
He bled and died to take away my sin.<sup>1</sup>*

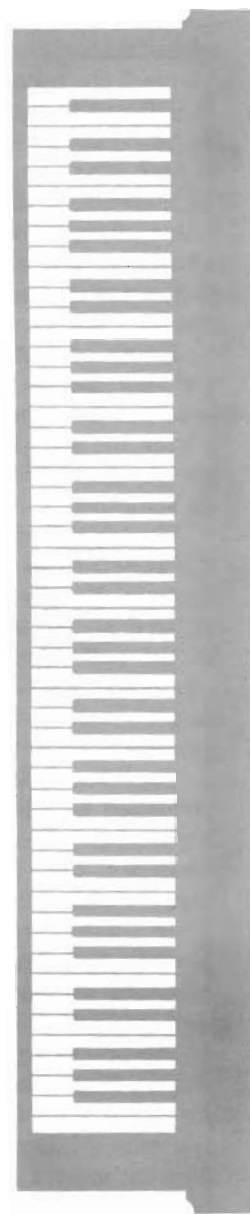
Before the choir returned to their homeland, we presented their director with a Russian Bible and a hymnal. Nothing, in my mind, could be more appropriate to express our love and friendship.

There is nothing quite like the great hymns of our faith. No matter what is sung on Sunday, the lyrics that lie latent on an unsung page can nourish any believer's life. Simply reading the words can fill your heart with song and your faith with fresh desire.

<sup>1</sup>©Copyright 1953 by Stuart K. Hine. Assigned to Manna Music, Inc. © Copyright 1955 by Manna Music, Inc. International Copyright secured. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

— Rev. Greg Asimakoupoulos  
Crossroads Covenant Church  
Concord, California

This is an excerpt of an article which first appeared in *Discipleship Journal*, July/August 1994. It is used by permission.



## YOUTH

### Youth in Missions

How excited are our youth about missions? Missions can range from inner-city projects, to Brazil and Mexico, to reaching out to the classmates and friends at school. Our teens work in puppet ministries, evangelism, sharing testimonies, helping to build churches, assisting at VBS, camping, retreats, cooking meals and the list could go on.

Hands-on ministry excites all of us! Ask the teen in your church who has been involved to tell you about his experience and share the joy and burden to continue to do something for Jesus.

We are asked by Jesus to pray for laborers to be sent into the harvest! Here is a ready laboratory, so to speak, to sense the reality of the call to missions or to the pastorate. Encourage your youth to get involved. Offer creative suggestions.

Your teenagers' faith will be stretched by short-term missions. Attitudes often are noticeably changed, too. The AFLC Youth Department offers, through the Free Lutheran Youth, trips to Mexico and Brazil. Partners in Missions provides two-week trips into Mexico.

Costs range from \$2,000 to Brazil, \$1,000 to Mexico and \$300 for a Partners in Mission trip to Obregon, Mexico. The Partners in Mission winter dates are: December 27-January 10 from Pipestone, Minnesota; January 26-February 9 from Ishpeming, Michigan via Newark, Illinois; late February-early March from the West.

For more information, contact Al Brazier, Route 2-Box 338, Greenbush, MN 56726; phone 218-782-2456. These trips are for everyone, age five and above. Families are welcome.

— Rev. Dennis Gray  
AFLC Youth Director

### AFLC youth at Metrodome



During last July's Youth Leadership Conference in Minneapolis, the teens had the privilege of playing softball in the Metrodome. The 50,000 screaming fans were the only thing missing.



Valley City, North Dakota — Pictured are some AFLBS alumni from the Grace and Zion parish representing classes from 1966-94. The alumni gathered for a program last spring to inform and encourage others to attend the Bible school. There are a total of 17 alumni in the Valley City parish.

**How does your  
congregation  
encourage and assist  
your teens to  
attend AFLBS?**

b. What is the very last verse (benediction) in the Bible? Revelation 22:21 \_\_\_\_\_

Let us praise and exalt our Savior Jesus Christ for His sacrificial work on our behalf: (1) in the past; (2) in the present; and (3) in the future.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Thank You, Lord. We bring before You the praise of our bodies as a living sacrifice. Help us through the presence of your Holy Spirit living in us, to be faithful examples and witnesses of Your mercy and love."

\*\*\*\*\*

#### A Personal Word From Our Writer:

I desire that these lessons will help us to remember we are the ones who should be sacrificed, but Jesus took our place. I pray we would desire to study His Word, talk to Him and live for Him.

—Mrs. Beryl Jalonen

### It Is Finished

"It is finished," the victorious, the great triumphant cry  
Broke from the lips of Jesus, suspended there on high.  
It is finished now, the suffering, the bitter agony,  
Sin's battle from eternity to vast eternity.

Finished — the eternal mission for which Christ came to earth,  
Accomplished now salvation's plan for souls of priceless worth,  
Finished, for the Savior, His Father's business done,  
That whosoever might receive His own beloved Son.

Finished — From time immemorial, Christ, the Paschal Lamb,  
Gave Himself, sin's sacrifice, and now the great I am.  
It is finished. Every child of God has access to the place,  
the holiest of holies — to meet Him face to face.

It is finished, all completed, His redeeming work is done.  
Yet incomplete in each of us, the work He has begun.  
That will be finished only in that day which is to come,  
when we, the long eternity shall spend with Him at Home.

— Marjorie Cooney

## THE OLD MEETS THE NEW

From Genesis to Revelation, we see the "red thread" of salvation entwined throughout the whole book. Right from the start, blood had to be shed for the forgiveness of sin. Let's look again at how the old and new covenants were connected and fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

### THE LAMB OF GOD SACRIFICED

1. This past year we have studied the offerings in the book of Leviticus. We saw the way the Israelites were instructed to come before the holy God in repentance, with an unblemished animal to be sacrificed in their place, time and time again. In this lesson, we will see that God Himself provided the perfect sacrifice in Jesus Christ.

a. How are we shown that Jesus was chosen?

(1) Isaiah 42:1-8a \_\_\_\_\_

(2) I Peter 1:20 - When? \_\_\_\_\_

(3) John 3:16 - Why? \_\_\_\_\_

(4) Galatians 4:4-5 - How? \_\_\_\_\_

b. Why was He sacrificed? Hebrews 10:5-7, 10 \_\_\_\_\_

### THE TABERNACLE AND SACRIFICES

2. The tabernacle on earth that God instructed the Israelites to build was but a picture of what was in heaven.

a. Hebrews 9:21-22 \_\_\_\_\_

b. What was offered in the perfect heavenly tabernacle?

(1) Hebrews 9:23-24 \_\_\_\_\_

(2) Hebrews 9:14 \_\_\_\_\_

(3) What is Christ doing in the presence of God for us? 1 John 2:1 \_\_\_\_\_

3. a. How often did animal sacrifices need to be repeated? Hebrews 10:11 \_\_\_\_\_

b. What happened when Jesus was sacrificed? Hebrews 10:12 \_\_\_\_\_

#### DAY OF ATONEMENT

4. a. Once a year on this day, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place. When Jesus Christ entered the Most Holy Place once for all through His death, what happened to the veil in the temple?

Matthew 27:50-51 \_\_\_\_\_

That beautiful, heavy, thick veil separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. That veil split "from top to bottom" — proving that God did it, not man. It was a miracle!

b. Discuss what that means to you and me. Hebrews 10:19-20 \_\_\_\_\_

c. What is that new and living way to the Father?

(1) John 14:6 \_\_\_\_\_

(2) John 10:9 \_\_\_\_\_

#### THE PASSOVER

5. a. The night before the Israelites left Egypt for the promised land, God instituted the Passover. What was the significance of the blood? Exodus 12:13-14 \_\_\_\_\_

b. The night before Jesus died, He and His disciples celebrated the Passover. It was that night that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. What is the significance of the bread and the cup? Luke 22:19-20 \_\_\_\_\_

c. Discuss what focus our hearts and minds should have when attending Holy Communion.

"As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

#### THE LAMB OF GOD EXALTED

As we have pondered the humility of Jesus to sacrifice His life, let's also ponder His glory now in heaven!

6. a. Read Philippians 2:5-11. Who has exalted Him, and to what place? (vs. 9-11) \_\_\_\_\_

b. Describe the scene of Jesus Christ the Lamb in heaven. Revelation 5:1-12 \_\_\_\_\_

7. Notice the place of importance and honor of the Lamb in heaven:

a. Revelation 15:3 - the song: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Revelation 17:14 - His name: \_\_\_\_\_

c. Revelation 19:9 - the event: \_\_\_\_\_

d. Revelation 21:23 - the light: \_\_\_\_\_

8. a. What are the last words of Jesus in Revelation 22:20? \_\_\_\_\_

## What makes a Lutheran congregation Lutheran?

Is it a Lutheran church because it says so on the signboard near the entrance? Is it because all of its pastors have graduated from a seminary which bears a "Lutheran" label? Is it the common liturgy and the usage of a common hymnal? Is it because all the pastors wear a distinctive garb? If the answer to this is any or all of the above then it is mighty hard to find a "Lutheran church" these days.

I can fully understand the confusion and sometimes despair a typical lay person experiences when moving to a new community. If one seriously looks for a Lutheran church to attend, frustration often results too. Either the person stops going to church or joins with almost any kind of a so-called independent, non-denominational church.

Perhaps you want to tell me my thinking and life is too structured; I'm too formal and I'm in the proverbial rut. Maybe I am. But if I am, then you will find that "rut" is crowded as there are hundreds, perhaps even thousands like me.

Since I've not had the privilege of serving a congregation during these past three years my wife and I have been "church tramps." As we visit one congregation after another looking for fellowship, we select congregations which are labeled "Lutheran." Disappointment seems to be what we consistently find.

We go to church to worship. But we find no consistency in the liturgy. There are at least half a dozen different orders of service being used. There are probably at least that many different hymnals in use. Some have thrown out liturgy entirely. Many have hymnals collecting dust because they use only gospel choruses with unfamiliar tunes and no printed music. Guitars are used instead of the organ. The Lord's Supper is served with strange elements and in the manner of some Reformed churches. The manner of the pastor in some would do credit to a Pentecostal church.

Are we ashamed to call ourselves Lutheran? I for one am not!

Just because one of the largest Lutheran synods has become so liberal in both doctrine and practice that it seems shameful, does not mean that true Lutheran doctrine is no longer valid or that the name is sullied. The doctrines and practices of the Lutheran church from the time of the Protestant Reformation are still valid Biblical usage. I am a Lutheran because I believe our doctrine is the closest to what the Bible teaches of any denomination today.

I believe we should make a serious effort to encourage Lutheran consistency in our congregations. We may call ourselves an Association of **Free** Lutheran Congregations, but that does not need to mean that we throw out the baby with the bath water. Let's have some good order in our worship services which will identify us as a brotherhood of true Lutherans. Let's have order, not confusion as we worship.

— by Rev. Robert D. Giles  
Laveen, Arizona

**Correction:** The article "When Little Toes Wiggle" in the *Ambassador*, August 23, 1994 issue on page two, had two sources: *A History of the Christian Church* by Qualben and the *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod publication from Concordia Publishing in St. Louis, Missouri.

### BANNERS AVAILABLE

Christ Lutheran WMF has Advent and Christmas banners and kits for sale. Proceeds go to AFLC missions. Please order early. For a catalogue and more information write: Christ Lutheran Church, Rt. 6, 4300, Wichita Falls, TX 76302

### Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

#### AFLC Benevolences – January 1 - August 31, 1994

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN AUGUST	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund . . . . .	\$256,591.00	\$15,733.87	\$143,474.20	56
Seminary . . . . .	148,000.00	5,769.84	80,377.76	54
Bible School . . . . .	232,562.00	7,630.40	102,312.42	44
Home Missions. . . . .	319,086.00	14,212.25	147,263.33	46
World Missions. . . . .	342,788.00	19,244.08	197,208.63	58
Capital Investment . . .	37,395.00	1,948.45	18,028.72	48
Parish Education . . .	67,868.00	2,614.08	26,114.37	38
ARC . . . . .	8,600.00	641.01	5,460.33	63
Church Extension . . .	10,000.00	483.09	7,919.65	79
<b>TOTALS . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,422,890.00</b>	<b>\$68,277.07</b>	<b>\$728,159.41</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>1993 Goal 67% . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,347,747.00</b>	<b>\$83,177.28</b>	<b>\$684,476.52</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>1994 Goal 67%</b>				



## Meet a new AFLC congregation

**Minneapolis, Minnesota** — Faith Free Lutheran will sponsor a Reformation Conference on October 30. Rev. John Strand, former president of the AFLC, will be the speaker. He will lead an adult Bible class beginning at 9:15 a.m. and preach at the 10:30 a.m. morning worship service.

**Rev. Wallace Jackson**, Perham, Minnesota, is the interim pastor at Slim Buttes Lutheran, Reva, South Dakota.

**Fox Valley School of Ministry**, near Norway, Illinois, began its first class for the 1994-95 school year. The class is taught by Rev. Scott Gray, Morris, Illinois on Thursday evenings for six weeks.

**Bloomington, Minnesota** — Emmaus Lutheran Choir has been invited to participate in an international advent sing in Vienna, Austria, during December 15-19.

**Astoria, Oregon** — Allison Mellgren, a recent graduate of AFLBS, is working as the youth director at Bethany Lutheran.

**Kenyon, Minnesota** — Hauge Lutheran held its annual service at its historic "Old Stone Church" on July 17, using both the English and Norwegian languages. Nearly 100 people attended representing five states. A grandson, great-grandson and great-great-grandson of Rev. Holte were present. Rev. Holte was the pastor of Hauge at the turn of the century.

**Rev. Roy Warwick**, Linderhurst, New York, accepted a call from the Mason-Drummond, Wisconsin, parish. He has already begun his ministry at Our Savior's and Drummond Lutheran. He previously served Unity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Massapequa, New York, an AFLC Home Mission congregation.

**Join us at AFLBS  
Homecoming October 7-9**



### Meet a new AFLC family member

St. Peter Lutheran, Metz, Michigan, began in 1880, when a group of German immigrants gathered to worship. The congregation was organized in 1883. In 1908, a forest fire raged through the community and the church burned. The present church was built in 1909, and has been affiliated with the Iowa Synod, ALC and ELCA. During the summer of 1994, the congregation with nearly 100 baptized members joined the AFLC. Rev. Fred Faughn became their pastor August 1.

**Oklahoma City, Oklahoma** — First Lutheran has begun an 18-week class offered both in morning and evening sessions titled: "Marriage Without Regrets: Learning How to Become One." First Lutheran is already making plans for the first Southern District Family Bible Camp to be held in Oklahoma, July 10-13, 1995. For the past three years, the camp has been in Texas.

**Pastor Todd Peterson and Pastor Irvin Schmitke**, Thief River Falls, Minnesota, have joined the staff at Our Saviour's Lutheran to assist Rev. Del Palmer. Both men are licensed lay pastors who have previously served congregations. This year Our Saviour's is without an intern.

**New London, Minnesota** — Gausdal Lutheran is now receiving on a temporary basis, pastoral service from Rev. Victor Young of nearby Green Lake Lutheran, Spicer.

**Hosanna Free Lutheran** is a new congregation that has recently been formed by the coming together of the Good Shepherd Free Lutheran Church of Rice Lake, Wisconsin and a number of people from the Cumberland, Wisconsin area. The new congregation will be served by Rev. Tom Olson as part of a two-point parish with Timberland Free Lutheran of rural Baronett, Wisconsin. Rev. Olson's new address is P.O. Box 1288, Cumberland, WI 54829; phone 715-357-6455.

## What is worship?

Attending events with people from other denominations can be an educational experience, especially for people like me who have been in the AFLC all our lives. At one such event the leader said, "Let's spend 30 seconds worshipping the Lord." What happened next sounded to me like nothing more than a lot of clapping and yelling. I was wondering, is that worship? I have heard others invite a group to spend some time in worship and what follows is the singing of hymns and choruses. Yes, music is a major part, but is it all there is to worship?

Congregations have an hour set aside on Sunday mornings which is called our worship time. Do we start to tell ourselves that is the only hour of the week that is spent in worship?

What is worship? In some ways I feel the more I reflect on the question the less I am sure of the answer. Of course, I can come up with a book answer. I can quote verses and give definitions to fill up a study time. It would be highly hypocritical of me, however, to say I have a total understanding of the meaning of worship. Maybe that shows I am actually starting to get some understanding of it.

In worship we are given the tremendous invitation to come near to the holy God. The heart of worship is intimacy with God. It is an invitation to receive revelation from God as to His person, His presence and His power. We are also given the opportunity to respond with thanksgiving, commitment, confession, supplication, praise and adoration. It has been said that worship "gives rhythm and structure to the Christian's life" and "is the heartbeat of congregational life." For the child of God it is a central part of his very being. And yet, it is a mystery.

It is a mystery because, while it is central to the one who is born from above as a new creation, it is foreign to the sinful, old nature each of us is born with. As Adam and Eve hid from God in the garden of Eden, so sin has continued to cause people to be fearful of God. The old nature seeks to hide from God instead of draw near. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, God deals with our sin that separates us from Him. He then invites us to come and worship. But we have a problem. We by nature don't know how to do it. God, however, graciously offers to teach us and help us.

We are in need of God's power and guidance in order to become true worshippers of Him. This reminds us that a central element of worship is humility. A beautiful example of worship is given in Isaiah 6. The holiness of God is revealed to the prophet (v. 3). His response is to confess his true

nature as being sinful and unclean (v. 5). He then humbly answers the call of God by laying his life before Him saying, "Here am I. Send me" (v. 8).

Another example of humility in worship is given by Jesus in Luke 18:9-14. A Pharisee went to the temple and prayed about himself, "God, I thank you that I am not like all other men." A tax collector was also at the temple. His prayer was, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner." He was the one who truly worshipped God.

Worship is not an event done to impress people or God. It is not a presentation of our achievements. It is not a ritual we go through in order to receive some kind of reward. It is a response to the relationship the Christian has with God because of Jesus. Worship happens because of what God has done. As one speaker said, "If you know why to worship the hows will come."

Discussion of worship often involves asking what people should do. We wonder if choruses or hymns should be sung. Can hands be raised or should they always be sat on? Can a guitar be played on Sunday morning or is the only allowable instrument an organ? Should a pastor wear some kind of vestment or a regular suit? And if a suit, what color should it be? Questions like these can lead to much controversy in a church. The problems may come because true worship is not taking place. The focus is on the rituals instead of the relationship. Much consideration is given to what people should do and little contemplation is happening on what God has done.

Worship that is God-centered, as it should be, leads to humility. It leads to an easing of the irritation we may have with others over some of our differences. Who am I to dogmatically say what they are doing is clearly wrong when the Bible is silent on the subject? Who am I to say I have all the answers for everyone else on the hows of worship? We can and should have opinions and preferences. Let us also strive for humility.

What is worship? It certainly involves music, but playing instruments and singing hymns and choruses is only an element of it. It can and should happen on Sunday mornings, although sadly it doesn't always. Worship begins with God. He reveals Himself to us. We, with His Holy Spirit guiding and helping us through the Bible, respond to Him. This can happen in a wide-range of ways and places. It should take place both individually and with others. It should happen every day of the week. Worship is not so much a thing we do once in a while. It is the life we live because of the wonderful God we have and the amazing offer of a relationship that He extends to us.

## Surrender ... and live the spirit-filled life

### I Can't live the Christian life

In the past two articles I have addressed the issues of how we become a Christian and how we can, with confidence, know that if we were to die today we would immediately be in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. In this article I want to share with you the key to living the victorious Christian life. In essence we will be answering the question, "How can I be used by God to produce good spiritual fruit in my life?" As I pastor I can't tell you how many people I talk to that struggle with living for Jesus. There seems to be a sense of frustration for many Christians in that they feel unable to live this life, let alone produce any good fruit for God's work here on earth.

### An Agricultural Illustration

In the book of John, chapter 15, Jesus gives us an illustration from the agricultural setting in which He lived. He points us to the image of a vine and its branches. It is quite obvious that a branch that is not connected to a vine cannot produce any fruit. It will certainly dry up and die. One that is loosely connected will produce very little fruit if any at all. In this illustration we learn some very important spiritual truth. Jesus is talking to His followers about how He is like a vine and we are the branches on the vine. Without us being fully connected to Jesus and drawing nourishment from Him we can produce no fruit. Jesus tells us in verse five that apart from Him we can do nothing! Many Christians try to live the Christian life and "be

fruitful" for the Lord and yet are so frustrated and defeated because they feel they are getting nowhere.

### The Key to Living the Christian Life

The problem with trying to live the Christian life is that it is impossible for us to do it. In fact, I firmly believe God's Word teaches that He never intended for us to live the Christian life in our own efforts. Many Christians are trying so hard to live for Jesus. This effort may indeed be the primary problem and source of frustration in their walk with Him. Nowhere in this passage does it say we are to work hard at living for Jesus and producing fruit for Him. I remind you again of Jesus' words that apart from Him we can do nothing. Many well-intentioned Christians think that their hard efforts in spiritual activity are what is going to produce results. It never will do this because spiritually speaking we cannot do a single thing apart from Jesus Christ. What is the key? In this passage Jesus mentions eight times that we are to "remain in Him." That is the key to living the Christian life.

### Remain in Jesus

All that we as Christians are asked to do is to remain in Jesus. What does this mean? It means I will stop striving in my own strength and start remaining or abiding in His strength. It means I will recognize my own inability to change myself and start relying on Him to make the changes. It means I will daily humble myself and allow Him to do in me what I am unable to do myself. It means I will stop all empty spiritual activities and start spiritual disciplines of meaningful prayer, meditation, memorization and worship. It means I will daily rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to guide, direct and produce spiritual fruit in my life.

### The Spirit Filled Life

The Holy Spirit is the very Spirit of God Himself who has come to live in every Christian. He is the One who can do in and through you what you cannot do for yourself. Surrender and live the Spirit-filled life!

— Rev. Todd Olson